



# WE ANIMALS | MEDIA

## Strategic Plan: 2020-2021



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## OUR MISSION

Bringing visibility to  
hidden animals through  
compelling photo and  
videojournalism.





# Who We Are

We Animals Media brings visibility to hidden animals through compelling photo and videojournalism. As the world's leading animal photojournalism agency, it is our mission to document the stories of animals in the human environment — those used for food, fashion, entertainment, and experimentation — and to connect those stories to the individuals and organizations who can amplify their reach.

Our growing network of award-winning photographers and videographers extends throughout the world, capturing images from a broad and diverse spectrum of animal industries. Together, we have created the world's leading library of animal images and video. This globally accessible resource is made available for free to anyone working to inspire compassion, conversation and change.





# Overview of Accomplishments:

## Rebranded and relaunched as We Animals Media

- Launched the new, rebranded website weanimalsmedia.org

## Created a firm organizational structure

- Registered as a nonprofit
- Secured funding to expand from We Animals to We Animals Media
- Hired a Director of Operations and Communications Specialist

## Established an organizational development strategy

- Hired our first Development Manager
- Implemented our first donor CRM

## Created a global network of contributors

- Began building a global network of top-tier photographers, filmmakers, editors, and writers

## Expanded our reach

- Added 11,000 images and video to our archive platform







## In 2019 we...

- ◇ Documented 26 stories of animal industries in Taiwan and Thailand
- ◇ Achieved a global reach of WAM images and films in 116 countries, along with a total of 155 media hits spanning magazine features and network news coverage
- ◇ Received coverage in The Guardian of our photo essays of live export and Thai pig slaughterhouses
- ◇ Published stories of 35 women working in animal advocacy for the Unbound Project
- ◇ Launched the We Animals Media Photography Masterclass series with 180 registrations at the close of 2019 and fostered a new, developing online community of animal photojournalists
- ◇ Included in the prestigious Wildlife Photographer of the Year award for Jo-Anne McArthur's photograph of children's bloody handprints at a Texas rattlesnake roundup
- ◇ Won best film in the category of Animal Advocacy at the IVFF for short documentary about animal testing and its modern alternatives "Gold Doesn't Rust"
- ◇ Delivered 13 talks at animal advocacy, law, and photo conferences, and over 10 interviews



## Strategic Directions for 2020-2021

As we continue shooting, our primary focus of 2020-2021 centers on building a stronger infrastructure for working with contributors and distributing our visuals. These efforts will result in a greatly increased capacity to document, distribute, and connect our work to broader audiences in the years to come. Over the next two years, We Animals Media will be pursuing the following strategic directions and key activities.

### 1. Increase brand awareness

We are living in a historical time for animal storytelling. Images which were once excluded from the mainstream have now found their place as essential to understanding some of the most pressing issues of our time. We Animals Media is uniquely positioned to lead the way in animal photojournalism by continuing to strengthen our relationships with contributors, organizations, educators, influencers, and today's most widely-read media organizations – together working to illuminate the lives of the animals that were once kept hidden from the public eye.

Establishing these partnerships requires a focused effort to increase our brand awareness. To start, in 2020-2021 we plan to update our website and our brand to more clearly communicate 1) our priority areas of animal stories, 2) how to collaborate with us on assignments, and 3) how to search, license, and utilize our visuals.

### Key Activities:

- Refresh our website to better communicate our purpose, how to work with us and how to use our library of 10,000+ royalty-free images and video (Q4, 2020)
- Create and implement a direct outreach plan to establish working relationships with key media outlets (2021)
- Increase strategic speaking engagements at photography, film, journalism and entrepreneurial conferences (2021)







## 2. Build a world-class image and video archive

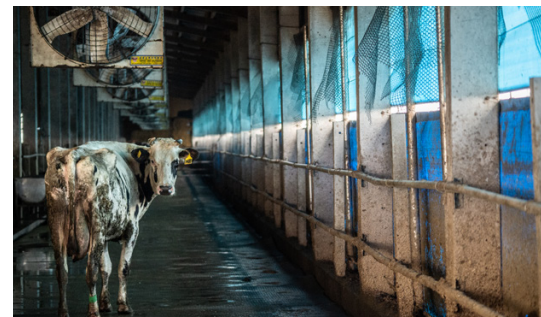
To strengthen the accessibility and impact of our growing body of work, our priority initiative in 2020-2021 is the reconstruction of our archive platform into a world-class collection of stock that is synonymous with the legacy of We Animals Media.

To achieve this, our site needs to provide the type of seamless user experience expected of a world class image and video library. This new platform will be structurally sound, easier to use, and more readily accessible to a growing base of global users. It is essential that our library can easily keep up with continuous contributions from our professional photographers and videographers from around the world as well as provide us with built-in reporting and reverse image search software to allow us to better track where and how the images and videos are being used.

Going forward, these improvements will position us for growth by better serving our user base and strengthening our professional credibility in the field of animal photojournalism.

### Key Activities:

- Update current archive platform with visual content produced in 2019 (Q1, 2020)
- Test a beta version of new platform with select end-users (end of Q1, 2021)
- Integrate the weanimalsmedia.org and weanimalsarchive.org domains under a unified web presence (Q2, 2021)
- Launch a full-scale new archive platform (Q2, 2021)







### 3. Prioritize uncovered and high-impact topic areas

We Animals Media intends to focus our coverage on the subjects that account for the greatest scale of animal suffering, and to produce content that will be most useful to the majority of our end-users and collaborators. Through collaborations with NGOs and media outlets as well as independent field work, our aim is that 85% of our work in 2020-2021 will focus on farmed animals and wild and farmed fish, with a special focus on industries in Asia and Latin America.

The remaining 15% of our work will be left open to 'other' coverage that will be responsive to emergent issues, to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. We plan to target those issues which 1) align with We Animals Media mission, 2) currently lack sufficient media coverage, and 3) have a strong likelihood of gaining wider-reaching media attention. In 2021, we will reassess and update our priority content areas to reflect the evolving needs of the animal protection movement.

#### Key Activities:

- Refresh our website to better highlight our priority focus areas (Q4, 2020)
- Collaborate directly with media outlets and NGOs to cover stories and produce strong visuals for impact-oriented campaigns





## 4. Work with a global network of content contributors

For the past two years, We Animals Media has been building a global team of contributing photo and videojournalists committed to documenting animal industries around the globe.

In 2020-2021, we plan to further develop these relationships, ensuring we have top-tier talent distributed across the globe. This contributor network will allow us to be more responsive to international animal stories as they develop and to strengthen partnerships with local and wider-reaching media outlets.

### Key Activities:

- Continue to identify and build relationships with high quality content contributors in priority geographic regions (Asia, Latin America) (ongoing 2020 - 2021)
- Establish connections with new photographers through the production and publication of our book *HIDDEN: Animals in the Anthropocene*
- License existing work of contributors on our archive (ongoing 2020 - 2021)
- Mentor 3 early career photojournalists local to priority regions







## 5. Increase presence in the professional photography world

In 2019, Jo-Anne McArthur's photograph of a Texas rattlesnake roundup, titled "The Wall of Shame," was selected as a finalist in the Wildlife Photographer of the Year competition. These kinds of prestigious photography and film competitions provide unparalleled opportunity to further legitimize the stories of animals who are often hidden from the public eye, reach broader audiences and potential collaborators, and generate significant media coverage of the image/film and the industry it depicts. We recognize this greatly untapped potential and, in 2020-2021, plan to develop a targeted approach to strategically apply for, and win, major contests in the areas of film and photojournalism.

With this strategy in mind, We Animals Media will produce and publish our third book *HIDDEN: Animals in the Anthropocene* which will be composed of photography from over 25 contributing photographers and will give an unapologetic look at the state of emergency on earth for non-human animals. The quality of the book will legitimize animal photojournalism as an important and urgent field and will give the topic an international audience.

### Key Activities:

- Identify and apply to strategic photography/ film awards (ongoing 2020 - 2021)
- Produce and publish *HIDDEN: Animals in the Anthropocene* book (Q4, 2020)







## 6. Increase revenue by 20%

To achieve our goals over the coming years, we need to invest resources into the reconstruction of our archive platform, produce a book, conduct field work, and sustain a core team of employees and contractors to maintain structure and stability within our organization. To accomplish these goals, we intend to increase our revenue by a target of 20% by 1) growing our individual donor base, 2) executing a successful crowdfunding campaign for the book, 3) developing a targeted grant strategy, 4) increasing donations and purchases generated through the archive platform in 2021, and 5) securing commissioned photo and video assignments from media outlets.

### Key Activities:

- Launch a crowdfunding campaign for HIDDEN (Q1, 2020)
- Hire a part-time Fundraising and Development Manager (Q1, 2020)
- Develop and execute a plan to increase our individual donor base (Q2, 2020)
- Develop and execute a targeted grant strategy (Q1, 2021)
- Develop a strong board of directors





## Strategic Shifts and Lessons Learned from 2018-2019

### Reorienting our goals as an agency

We Animals has seen tremendous development over the past 15 years. What started as one woman and her camera has now grown into a small media team using images, film, and journalism to tell the stories of animals around the world. In 2018 we set out to be storytellers and multimedia producers, focusing on telling the stories that accompany our images and video. We collaborated with creative professionals to produce dozens of multimedia articles and short documentaries spanning a wider range of topics than ever before.

At the close of 2019 our team gathered to reflect on our body of work, its overall impact, and what it could be. After much consideration, we have reoriented to the heart of WAM's purpose; producing high-quality images and video of hidden animals. Our archive platform is a unique resource and continues to be utilized worldwide to amplify the stories of animals – and we are only just beginning to realize its full potential.

With this renewed focus on improving and expanding access to our photo and video library, we will be shifting our efforts away from producing in-house multimedia pieces. Instead, we will strive to make our photo and video footage as relevant, high-quality, and accessible as possible for all those who depend on it, allowing others to tell these stories, and in doing so, remain aligned with our mission to bring visibility to hidden animals worldwide.

### The Unbound Project

The Unbound Project (UP) celebrates the women on the front lines of animal advocacy. In 2018-2019, we increased our output of these stories to highlighting 35 women, including a feature of ten plant-based women athletes and a partnership with Encompass featuring women of colour working on animal advocacy.

Noticing that The Unbound Project required a considerable amount of our team's resources to sustain, and that its impacts were largely unclear, in late 2019 we conducted a survey to learn more about the visibility of and engagement with the Unbound Project's content. Through this feedback process, we ascertained that this audience sees this work as valuable, with the top expected outcomes being to increase visibility of underrepresented women leaders in the movement, and to inspire and motivate others to become leaders in the field.



Using this information we determined that the Unbound Project is worth continuing in its existing online format and could be run with equal impact at a much lower cost with a volunteer team and paid coordinator. Recognizing that shifting the model takes resources, we put the Unbound Project on hiatus in 2020. The Unbound Project will relaunch In 2021 with a dedicated part-time Coordinator and volunteer team, to be run alongside We Animals Media.

## Mentorship

As the field of animal photo and videojournalism grows, so does the need for education and support. To meet this demand, we have increasingly invested our resources in projects that are more widely accessible and largely self-sustaining, such as the We Animals Media Photography Masterclass series and the Masterclass Facebook community. We plan to resume our portfolio reviews and establish a fellowship program in 2021.





20202021

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Telling their story.